



Fuel True Announces Executive Director Thomas Palace Retirement

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Fuel True – Independent Energy and Convenience today announced that Thomas Palace, the association's longtime Executive Director, has decided to retire effective December 31, 2021. Current Associate Executive Director Becky Schwartz will take the helm upon his retirement.

Palace began serving the fuel marketing and retail industry in 1996. As Executive Director, he has overseen the operations and management of the association and its affiliated entities for over 25 years.

"As chair of the search committee who hired Tom, I can attest that he was by far the most qualified candidate," said Marvin Spees, former board chairman of Fuel True and owner of Capital City Oil. "With mergers and consolidations, associations aren't what they used to be. Yet, I've watched Tom adapt and grow our organization in ways that did not require burdensome dues increases on our members."

As Executive Director, Palace is the chief lobbyist for the association and its independent petroleum marketing members. In 2012, he worked with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to develop the Underground Storage Tank (UST) Property Redevelopment Trust Fund. These dollars are used to help tank owners remove abandoned USTs that could have potential contamination leaks or are a blight to the community. In 2015, he was also instrumental in crafting the Underground Storage Tank Act currently in Kansas statute.

Another legislative priority for Fuel True has always been to continue to modernize Kansas liquor laws. Palace has successfully advocated for several pieces of legislation on behalf of their retail members. In 2005, the Kansas Legislature approved to permit cities and counties to allow alcohol to be sold on Sundays; in 2019, grocery and convenience stores could begin selling full-strength beer; and in 2020, Kansas expanded the hours that liquor could be sold in the state.

"Tom's ability to work with lawmakers and agencies toward compromise that both industry and regulators can support is a gift," said Jerry Chaput, Fuel True Board President and Fuel Manager of Mitten Travel Plaza. "On behalf of the Board of Directors, we want to thank him for representing our profession with dignity, honesty and respect. We wish him and his family the absolute best."

Upon his retirement, Palace plans to assist the association with its lobbying efforts and spend more time golfing at his home in Florida.

Fuel True – Independent Energy and Convenience is a statewide trade association representing the independent marketing segment of the petroleum industry. Fuel True membership consists of nearly 200 licensed petroleum distributors, convenience store owners/operators and gasoline retailers. Headquartered in Topeka, the association provides lobbying representation, educational programs, and regulatory guidance as well as other industry-specific services and programs to member firms. Fuel True is the oldest petroleum association of its kind in the United States. It was founded in 1914 as the Kansas Oil Men's Association.

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